

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /056 W

-----191405Z 120224 /43

R 182000Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4471

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 1300

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JM

SUBJECT: JLP DEMANDS PROBE OF PARISH ELECTIONS

REFERENCE: KINGSTON 1232

1. THE OPPOSITION JAMAICA LABOUR PARTY (JLP) HAS CALLED FOR A PROBE INTO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS WHICH WERE HELD ON MARCH 8 AND WHICH RESULTED IN A RESOUNDING VICTORY FOR THE RULING PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY (PNP). IN A STATEMENT RELEASED BY THE PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE ON MARCH 16, THE JLP DEMANDED THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY AND ALSO "THE INTRODUCTION OF WIDESCALE REFORMS IN THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM".

2. IN ITS STATEMENT, THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SET FORTH A VARIETY OF ELECTORAL IRREGULARITIES. THESE INCLUDE:

-- ADDITIONS TO THE LIST OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS WHICH, AS IN THE DECEMBER 1976 ELECTIONS, WERE MADE AVAILABLE TOO LATE FOR SCRUTINY;

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-- STUFFING OF BALLOT BOXES BY GUNMEN;

-- STUFFING OF BALLOT BOXES BY ELECTION OFFICIALS;

-- MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCES OF BALLOT BOXES WHICH LATER REAPPEARED -- WELL-STUFFED;

-- COERCION OF "IMPACT PROGRAMME" WORKERS; AND

-- DELAY IN DELIVERY -- OR EVEN MIS-DELIVERY -- OF IDENTITY
CARDS NEEDED BY VOTERS TO OBTAIN BALLOT PAPERS.

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DESCRIBED THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM
AS HAVING BEEN "RAPED AND PLUNDERED IN (A) SHAMELESS
WAY", AND REITERATED THE CALL, FIRST VOICED BY JLP
LEADER EDDIE SEAGA JUST AFTER THE DECEMBER 1976
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS FOR AN EXTENSIVE REFORMATION OF THE
ELECTORAL SYSTEM IN JAMAICA. IT CLOSED BY SAYING
THAT THE JLP'S DETAILED PROPOSAL FOR SUCH REFORMS
WILL BE ANNOUNCED "WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS."

3. COMMENT: THE JLP'S STATEMENT HAS MUCH THE SOUND
OF THE GORED OX ABOUT IT, ALTHOUGH IT DOES DESCRIBE
IRREGULARITIES WHOSE OCCURRENCE IS WIDELY-KNOWN
AND GRAVE. WHETHER THE JLP DEMAND FOR ELECTORAL REFORM
WILL RECEIVE SERIOUS ATTENTION IS HARD TO SAY,
PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS STATEMENT RAISES A QUESTION
REGARDING THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S LEGITIMACY. IT
IS RATHER SAD THAT THE JLP'S VIGOR OF LANGUAGE IN
ITS POST-ELECTION PRONOUNCEMENTS WAS NEVER MATCHED
BY THE VIGOR OF ITS CAMPAIGNING IN LAST DECEMBER'S
PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND THOSE FOR PARISH COUNCIL SEATS
HELD EARLIER THIS MONTH.
GERARD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 18-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Litigation History:
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